

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

Child sexual abuse is the exploitation or coercion of a child for the sexual gratification of another person.

Child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of power and/or influence over a child.

Child sexual abuse includes exploitation, molestation, rape, incest and prostitution.

FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE:

1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys will have a sexually abusive or sexually exploitative experience by the time they are 18 years old.

85-95% of victims knew their offenders prior to the assault.

MYTHS ABOUT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE:

Children somehow encourage or want abuse to occur: **Sexual abuse involves the sexual use of a child. The offender is always responsible for the abuse, never the child.**

Children lie or make up stories about sexual abuse: **It is extremely rare that a child would create stories or fantasies about being sexually abused.**

IF YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN SEXUALLY ABUSED

Sometimes sexual abuse occurs despite our best efforts to protect our children. As a parent or caretaker, you are not alone in facing these issues.

- ♥ Take a moment to think of people you trust to be supportive of you and your family.
- ♥ Call an information and referral line and talk with someone who will listen and be able to assist you with resource information.
- ♥ Do not be afraid or ashamed to ask for or to receive support and assistance.
- ♥ Count as a success the fact that your child was able to talk with you or someone they trusted about abuse.

Children's Response Center

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TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT PREVENTING SEXUAL ABUSE

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARETAKERS



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GENERAL TIPS

Maintain a close, open relationship with your child so he/she will feel comfortable talking and asking questions when troubled or feeling confused.

Have ongoing conversations about what sexual abuse is with your child, and talk about safety.

Speak calmly to your child when talking about sexual abuse and safety.

Demonstrate interest in what your child is doing, where your child goes, and with whom your child spends time.

Support your child in feeling strong and sure of her/himself. Support other children to feel that way as well.

Listen, believe and trust what your child tells you.

Trust your intuition. If something does not feel right, act on it.

Always remember that you are the most important and influential person in your child's life.

BELIEVE YOUR CHILD!

ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN

- ♥ Talk with your child about safe and unsafe kinds of touches.
- ♥ Talk about different types of secrets, and encourage your child to talk about secrets that make her/him feel bad or uncomfortable.
- ♥ Teach your child that she/he has the right to be safe, and to say "NO" if that right is being taken away.
- ♥ Review safety strategies with your child.
- ♥ Check out books on assault prevention and self-esteem and read them with your child.
- ♥ Monitor your child's access to the Internet. Talk about safety concerns with your child.
- ♥ Help your child identify people she/he believes are safe and supportive. Tell your child to talk with you or one of her/his support people about problems.
- ♥ Evaluate your child's walking routes, and talk about which ones are more safe than others.
- ♥ Practice assertiveness skills with your child, like saying "NO", and running away when she/he feels unsafe.

ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS AND CARETAKERS

- ♥ Be aware of the people in your neighborhood, school, or community where others have access to your child.
- ♥ Become more comfortable with talking about your body and your child's body so your child will know it is OK to talk with you when she/he is feeling confused or scared.
- ♥ Increase your understanding of normal child development, so you will be better able to monitor behaviors that may be concerning.
- ♥ Be wary of older children or adults who want to spend a great deal of time alone with your child.
- ♥ Seek information about the subject of sexual assault from local agencies.
- ♥ Assist in developing a "block watch" in your neighborhood to increase the level of safety for all children living there.
- ♥ Talk about child abuse prevention and safety with other parents and caretakers.
- ♥ Get to know your child's friends and the homes in which your child plays.